SPEECH

DELIVERED AT A MEETING

OF THE

SENATUS ACADEMICUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

ON THE 20TH NOV. 1824,

RESPECTING

A PROPOSAL FOR NEW REGULATIONS IN GRANTING THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

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SPEECH, &c.

Mr Principal,

I now rise to address the Senatus Academicus on a question which, after frequent and deliberate consideration, I hold to be of the highest importance to the honour and interest of the University. I have committed my sentiments on this subject to writing, that I may state them as distinctly and as briefly as I am able. I have protested *in toto* against the new Regulations for conferring the degree of Doctor in Medicine, proposed to the Senatus Academicus from the Faculty of Medicine; and if what I am now to say, shall not obtain the immediate rejection of these new Regulations, I hope that, by committing to print the observations I am now to offer, I shall demonstrate to posterity that I had no hand in a measure which, in my opinion, will deprive every future Doctor of Medicine, from the University of Edinburgh, of the high honour which that title has hitherto conferred.

As a necessary preliminary to the objections which I shall state to the new Regulations, it will be requisite for me to give a very short account of the origin of our present Statuta Solennia, and of the principal changes which have been made on them, since they were first enacted about an hundred years ago.

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I need not tell you, Sir, that three of the Scottish Universities, St Andrew's, Aberdeen, and Glasgow, were founded by authority of the Popes of Rome, when Papal authority was supreme over all Europe. These Universities, for many years, were almost solely appropriated to the learned languages, and to Divinity. They obtained, however, from the Pope, the high privilege of conferring all the University honours then known in Europe. They obtained authority to create Doctors, not only in Divinity, but in Law and in Medicine, although neither Medicine nor Law were taught in any of them. It is therefore not wonderful, that, in the hands of the Clergy, then the only Professors, these honours soon became as scandalously venal as the pardons for sins, which were currently sold by the ecclesiastics of those days. And so shameful was the sale of literary honours, that it was said, not without some truth, that the poor Scottish Universities would get rich by degrees.

In this situation, Sir, were the Scottish Degrees, when the University of Edinburgh was established, not by a bull from the Pope, but by a charter from a Protestant monarch, JAMES VI. of Scotland. He conferred, Sir, upon the University of Edinburgh, and on the Rectors, Regents, Bursars and Students of that College, all liberties, freedoms, immunities and privileges, appertaining to an free College, and that in as

ample form as any College has or bruiks within his Majesty's realm.

These high privileges, Sir, were soon after ratified and confirmed by an act of the Parliament of Scotland in 1621. After this ratification of their privileges by the Legislature of the kingdom, the University of Edinburgh, for about a century, conferred the degree of Doctor of Medicine in the same venal way with the other Scottish Universities.

But about the year 1726, in imitation of the Protestant University of Leyden, then the most celebrated school of medicine in Europe, medical lectures were introduced into the University of Edinburgh. Those eminent men to whom Edinburgh is indebted for the commencement of its Medical School, Drs Monro primus, Sinclair, Alston, Plummer, and Rutherford, who were the first who delivered medical lectures in the University of Edinburgh, formed a very judicious set of laws for the creation of Doctors of Medicine. By these laws, it was enacted, that no one should, on any testimonials whatever, obtain the degree of Doctor of Medicine, unless when personally present; that every candidate for that degree should undergo an examination in the Latin language, before those Professors who had, by the Senatus Academicus, been appointed the Faculty of Medicine in the University; that, at this trial, the candidate should be examined by that Facul-

ty, both on literature in general, and on all the branches of Medicine, *ut nemo nisi literarum et Medicinæ scientia rite imbutus Candidatorum numero adscribatur.* It was also enacted, that, besides writing exercises in the Latin language, on an aphorism of HIPPOCRATES, as a Greek trial, and on histories of medical cases as a practical trial, every candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine should be obliged to subject a printed inaugural dissertation, written by himself, not only to the Faculty of Medicine, but also *eruditorum examini*, and should attend on the day of graduation, ready to defend what he had published, in presence of the Senatus Academicus. It was only after a satisfactory termination of this public challenge, that any candidate could obtain at Edinburgh *summos in Medicina honores, gradum nempe Doctoralem.*

By these judicious regulations, Sir, I need hardly observe, it was effectually provided that no one should obtain the degree of Medicinæ Doctor from the University of Edinburgh, till he had afforded sufficient evidence that he was really a Vir Doctior. These fundamental regulations have, in all essential particulars, been uniformly observed, from the period of their first enactment till the present day. And I need not tell you, that the effect of these regulations has been, to extend the honour of a Degree in Medicine, from the University of Edinburgh, over all Europe.

Nor need I mention the avidity with which this degree has been sought for by Students ambitious of obtaining a highly honourable distinction.

This is abundantly demonstrated by the number of Doctors of Medicine which our University has lately sent into the world. From a very few in number, at the commencement, when I had the honour of being admitted a Professor, we annually conferred the degree of Doctor of Medicine on about thirty students. But, since that period, as your records testify, the increase has been very considerable indeed. At the graduation in 1820, when it was last my duty to officiate as *Promotor ad gradum Doctoralem in Medicina*, that honour was conferred on no less than 121 Students. And I am firmly convinced, that, of all that number, there was not a single individual who had not a just claim to obtain from our University the title of a Vir Doctior. Although, however, the great fundamental laws to which I have alluded have been rigidly adhered to, yet I do not pretend to say that no changes have taken place in our Statuta Solennia. Of the principal of these changes, as well as of the reasons which led to them, I shall endeavour to give you a brief account.

The first change I shall mention, was in consequence of the graduation of Dr Richard Pulteney in 1764. Dr Pulteney was a very learned man, and had the additional merit of being a

self-taught man. When a respectable apothecary in Northampton, he came to the University of Edinburgh, not as a student, but for the sole purpose of graduating. Without having attended a single medical lecture in any University, either here or elsewhere, he presented himself as a candidate for the degree of Doctor in Medicine. He delivered to the then Dean of the Faculty of Medicine an excellent inaugural dissertation, De Cinchona officinali. This abundantly demonstrated to the Professor into whose hands it was put for a *perlegi*, before obtaining an *imprimatur*, that he was both a very learned man and a very excellent botanist. And, from the report made of it by the Professor to whom it was submitted, he entered on his future trials under very favourable circumstances. He underwent, with credit to himself an examination in the Latin language, which afforded abundant evidence to the Faculty of Medicine that he was both *literarum et medicinæ scientia probe imbutus.* By the commentary which he wrote on an aphorism of HIPPOCRATES, which was prescribed to him, he demonstrated an extensive knowledge of the Greek language. And after subjecting his inaugural dissertation *eruditorum examini*, he appeared publicly before the Senatus Academicus, ready to demonstrate his abilities, by defending it. Under these circumstances, Sir, no one can be surprised, that, as the Statuta Solennia then stood, this self-taught

man obtained, even from the University of Edinburgh, *summos in medicina honores.*

But, Sir, when it was known, particularly in Oxford, in Cambridge, and in London, that any man, whatever his abilities might be, had obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh, who had never studied in any University, and who had received no other education but that of an Apothecary's Apprentice, it was considered as a shameful prostitution of academical honours. It was contended, and, in my opinion, with great justice, that academical honours should be conferred upon no man who had not studied at Universities. Accordingly, to prevent such an occurrence in future, the first remarkable alteration in our Statuta Solennia took place. It was enacted, that no one should obtain the degree of Doctor of Medicine, till he had heard lectures on six different branches of medical science, *in hac aut in alia Academia ubi summi in medicina honores conceduntur.*

Soon after this enactment took place, another graduation occurred at Edinburgh, which not only led to another change, but pointed out the necessity of adhering rigidly to the statutes, and not dispensing with them, either from evidence of industrious attention, or of knowledge in the practice of medicine. I allude to the graduation of Dr Samuel Leeds in 1766. That gentleman, after being considerably advanced in life, and af-

ter having attended both hospital and medical lectures in London, came to Edinburgh, principally with the view of obtaining the highest honours in medicine from our University. He attended with great assiduity here all the medical lectures which our statutes required. At that time, the lectures both on the Institutions and Practice of Medicine were delivered in the Latin language by Drs Rutherford and Whytt. Dr Leeds was a most attentive hearer of both, and no student, as I well know, for I was at that time his fellow-student, was more assiduous in taking notes in writing from the Lectures of Professors. Under these circumstances, it is not perhaps wonderful, that an artful and illiterate man, pleading inability to express his meaning in Latin, should have prevailed upon the Medical Faculty to grant him a peculiar indulgence, by conducting his examinations in the English language. The trials of Dr Leeds were accordingly conducted in English. These English examinations he passed with credit; and when his inaugural dissertation came to be defended, no questions were put to him, but a compliment was paid by the impugning Professor, both to his dissertation *De Asthmate spasmodica*, and to his uncommon industry in attending lectures.

Dr Leeds having thus acquired the highest medical honours at Edinburgh, returned to London. There he soon obtained the character of be-

ing an excellent practitioner. On a vacancy of the office of a Physician to the London Hospital, he stood candidate for that appointment, and carried his election by a great majority.

In a short time, however, when discharging the duties of that office, he demonstrated, not only to the Students at the Hospital, but to the Apothecary, and even to Apothecaries' apprentices, that he was an illiterate man. He was summoned to undergo an examination before the College of Physicians of London, where no dispensation for an examination in English is ever granted. Imagining that he had sufficient Latin to answer questions, and that he had more medical knowledge than many who had passed examinations before the London College, he attended to undergo an examination by them. But, I need hardly tell, that, although he had obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh, he was found *non satis doctus* to practise as a Physician in London.

This occurrence, Sir, led to another material change in our Statuta Solennia. It was not only resolved never again to dispense with the law which requires that *omnes exercitationes in lingua Latina peragendæ sunt*, but that, before any student was received among the number of candidates, or appeared as such, *intra Academiæ pomœria*, he should undergo an *examen privatissi-*

mum, where questions may be put, *vel viva voce vel scripto*, by his answers to which, the Faculty of Medicine might certainly know that every one aspiring to the honour of a degree in Medicine, from the University of Edinburgh, was really a *vir doctus*. This *examen privatissimum*, though very great additional trouble to every member of the Faculty of Medicine, I hold to have been a very important addition to our statutes, as it puts it in the power of that Faculty, without doing an injury to the individual, to prevent any one from aiming at the degree of Doctor of Medicine who is not *satis doctus*.

Besides these two important alterations, a third very necessary addition to our original Statuta Solennia was afterwards made. As the first of the changes, to which I have alluded, was the consequence of the graduation of Dr Pulteney, and the second of Dr Leeds, this third was the consequence of the graduation of Dr David Hay in 1809. Dr Hay was the son of an eminent practitioner in Edinburgh, a youth of promising abilities, who had a regular education, both at our High School and University. His acquirements at both these seminaries did him great honour. Intended by his father to be a general practitioner of medicine, in whom the Physician, the Surgeon, and the Apothecary, are to a certain degree combined, he was bound an apprentice, with a view to his introduction into the Royal

College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. At an early period of life he had finished in our University that curriculum of medical studies required for our graduation. And before he had reached the age of manhood, before his apprenticeship was expired, he obtained, with great applause, from us, *summos in medicina honores*. Although, upon this occasion, these honours were conferred upon one, *literarum et medicinæ scientia probe imbutus*, yet it is not wonderful that this event should have given rise to a flagrant report, that we were conferring the degree of Doctor of Medicine on apprentices and on boys.

That in future no foundation might be given for such reports, a third very important change was made in our statutes. By this change, it was enacted, that every one aspiring to be candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, should deliver to the Dean of that Faculty a solemn declaration, signed by his own hand, that, before obtaining authority from the University to practise medicine upon others, he had arrived at that age which, by the laws of the land, is requisite for the management of his own pecuniary concerns. In that declaration he pledges his honour, that, before obtaining his degree, he will be both *a man* and a *free man*, *nullius servitio addictus*.

Under these judicious regulations, the Medi-

cal School at Edinburgh, notwithstanding the severe losses it has lately sustained by the death of Professors of the very first eminence,—of a CULLEN, a BLACK, and a MONRO,—has been much increased, as our matriculation list in the Album of the University, and our annual medical graduations, abundantly testify. Under these regulations, the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh has obtained distinguished honour in every polished nation, in every quarter of the world, as being conferred only on those who have received a regular medical education at Universities, and who have made a good use of the opportunities which they enjoyed. Under these judicious regulations, the number of medical graduates at Edinburgh, in the space of little more than half a century, has increased from about 20 to about 120 annually.

But this increased number of graduates, and those strict examinations which were required, imposed a very fatiguing labour on every Professor of Medicine, whose duty it was, by the statutes of the University, to be an examinator. And I am not ashamed to acknowledge, that, after reaching the age of threescore and ten, I was anxious to retire from that fatigue. I accordingly relinquished it almost entirely to my coadjutor Dr ALISON; and, while I continued in full possession of my seat in the Senatus Academicus, I relinquished to him the whole duties of those ex-

aminations, which are particularly imposed on Professors of the Faculty of Medicine.

From the increase of the number of Graduates in Medicine, the trouble of attending examinations became so great that it is by no means wonderful, it should have been severely felt, even by the youngest Professors who were the least engaged in other business. Accordingly, after I had relinquished my attendance at the most important trial, the *examen privatissimum*, I was not surprised to find the Faculty of Medicine applying to the Senatus Academicus, for another change in the original statutes. The change to which I now allude, only obtained the sanction of the Senatus Academicus it 1823. Hence, it has hitherto been acted upon, at one Graduation only. This change, had indeed a very considerable effect in diminishing the labour of the Faculty of Medicine. For by it two different trials, formerly required of candidates, were completely abolished.

This change, as I did not believe it would hurt the credit of the University or lessen the honour of our degree of Doctor of Medicine, I did not think I was imperatively called upon to oppose. The change to which I now allude, abolished entirely the commentary required to be written by each candidate, on an Aphorism of Hippocrates. This, I need hardly observe, was intended as a trial of the knowledge of every candidate in the Greek language. It is indeed

true, that this commentary was to be written in the Latin language ; and that the aphorism was delivered to the candidate not in the original Greek, but in a Latin translation. Still, every candidate had an opportunity in his commentary, of shewing his knowledge of the Greek language, and every examining Professor, if he had reason to suspect that the candidate was entirely ignorant of Greek, had an easy opportunity of detecting that ignorance, by even a single question, *vel viva voce vel scripto*. And, although the study of the Greek language among our candidates, has in my opinion, been of late too much neglected ; yet every Professor must allow, that we ought to send out no men into the world, honoured with our degree as a *vir doctior*, who is entirely ignorant of the Greek language.

Besides abolishing the Aphorism, the change in 1823 abolished also another trial, a question on the Philosophy of Medicine, to which a proper answer was to be returned in writing, with an illustration of the subject proposed in that question. A question on the Philosophy of Medicine had constituted a part of the trial of every Candidate, from the first enactment of our Statuta Solennia, and it was certainly a trial which might prevent any one ignorant of Natural Philosophy, or of the Philosophy of the Human Body, from obtaining the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Edinburgh.

For these reasons, it was, I own, my wish, that

both these trials instituted by the wisdom of our predecessors, had been retained. Yet trusting, that, by the other trials still retained, particularly by the Inaugural Dissertation, subjected, by every candidate, *examini eruditorum*, and by the *examen privatissimum*, being conducted entirely in the Latin language, I concluded, that every illiterate candidate would still be effectually excluded from our Medical Honours. I did not therefore oppose the alteration of our statutes, which was recommended by the Faculty of Medicine in 1823, although I thought it improper.

With the diminution of labour which the Faculty of Medicine had obtained by this change, I had little doubt that they would have been contented, and that they would not have requested any farther diminution, at least for some years. But I need hardly observe, that an occurrence has lately taken place in our University, which has led to a very long and very disagreeable discussion respecting our *Statuta Solennia*. Dr Hamilton, Professor of Midwifery, from motives best known to himself, but, in my opinion, chiefly with the view of promoting his own pecuniary interest, by obtaining a very unfair advantage over other respectable teachers of Midwifery in Edinburgh, lately presented a very extraordinary Memorial to the Patrons of the University. That Memorial, in which he endeavours to demonstrate the great superiority of Midwifery over every branch of Me-

dical Science, I have no hesitation in asserting, contained a false and calumnious libel, not only upon me as an individual Professor, particularly alluded to, but on all lecturers on the Institutions of Medicine, and on the Statuta Solennia *de Gradu doctoratus in medicina capessendo*, which have been followed ever since the establishment of a Medical School in the University of Edinburgh. But of the numerous errors and mistatements in that extraordinary Memorial, I shall at present only say, that it is my intention to bring it soon before the Senatus Academicus, confidently trusting, that, without allowing themselves to be misled, either by friendship for a colleague, or compassion for a penitent transgressor, they will inflict such punishment on a delinquent Professor, as they shall think he deserves. At present it is sufficient to say, that his petition to our Patrons, necessarily led to a reconsideration of those Statutes, of which an altered edition had been published to our students, only one year prior to his request in that Memorial.

When these statutes came again under consideration, I was by no means surprised to find, that, besides the Professor of Midwifery, several other Professors who have lately been admitted into the University, should make similar claims to have the branches taught by them introduced into the curriculum of studies necessary for graduation. These branches, particularly Natural History, Medical Jurisprudence, Clinical Surgery,

and Military Surgery, have, in my opinion, a much stronger plea for being introduced into your curriculum than the Midwifery. All these branches of knowledge are intimately connected with the healing art; and although they may be taught with great benefit at many different places, yet they cannot be studied in any other situation with so great advantage as in the precincts of an University. With Midwifery, the case is very different. Midwifery cannot be properly studied in an University. Besides this, it is by no means necessary that every Physician should qualify himself for being a *Sage Femme*,—a *Houdy-wife*, in the dialect of the vulgar Scot. And indeed it is the opinion of many physicians, that to old women the ordinary business of Midwives should be entirely confined. That knowledge which is necessary for the profession of a Midwife, is at least a species of knowledge which adds little honour to a *Vir doctior*.

But, without entering into any controversy about the dignity of Midwifery, it is sufficient for my present purpose to say, that the claims now made by the Professor of Midwifery, and several other Professors, led to the reconsideration of those statutes, of which we had published to our students an amended edition only a few months before. To this reconsideration I made no objection, and I expected that the Faculty of Medicine might recommend that the Senate

should encrease the honour of Doctors of Medicine, by extending the terms of study at Universities, and by enlarging the curriculum during that study. But I little suspected, that, in place of presenting to us an improved edition of your original statutes, as had always been the case before, they would ever have thought of recommending to the Senate an entire new system of regulations for conferring the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Edinburgh. I little suspected that a new system of regulations in the English language would ever have been recommended to you, by which a door would be opened for conferring the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh, on illiterate apothecaries and impudent empyrics. Your Statuta Solennia, have, in every edition, uniformly required, that *exercitationes omnes lingua Latina peragendæ sunt.* And unless this law be sacredly observed, I will venture to fortell, that illiterate men will soon obtain degrees here, which will disgrace every future Doctor of Medicine from Edinburgh. Although I had not held this opinion before, it would have been enforced upon me, by an occurrence which has taken place since the commencement of the present session. A gentleman called upon me to enter himself as a student for the Institutions of Medicine. He, like several others, put some questions to me respecting the new system of laws for graduation.

He told me he had long been engaged in the study, and even in the practice, of Medicine ; that he confidently trusted he would be able to demonstrate his knowledge of Medicine, by examinations in the English language, but that he was totally incapable of undergoing an examination in Latin. And if you shall now repeal this highly important regulation, it will not surprise me if your degree, in the short space of even a few months, shall, in the person of this gentleman, meet with as dishonourable a rebuff as in the case of Dr Leeds, which I have already mentioned. I would hope that every considerate Professor will dread the consequences of any deviation from the rule which I think ought to be inviolable : *Exercitationes omnes lingua Latina peragendæ sunt.*

I had no sooner perused the new system of Regulations, than insuperable objections to it occurred to me. In the 1*st* place, The Regulations, imitating the example of Glasgow, were for the use of the Senatus Academicus, and were, of course, to be promulgated to the Student, not as formerly, in the Latin, but in the English language. 2*d*, The Inaugural Dissertation subjected *eruditorum examini*, which was formerly required from every Candidate, was left entirely optional ; and, 3*dly*, The *examen privatissimum*, according to the first edition of your new Regulations, was to be conducted entirely in the English language ; by

this means, illiterate men would have been enabled to give such answers, that they could not be refused a degree from the University, without the most shameful injustice.

To all these particulars in the new Regulations, I stated my objections in the strongest terms to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. I particularly represented the Inaugural Dissertation, which was the very first trial in our original Statuta, as being the most essential, as well as the most private, and the most convenient trial, for ascertaining not only the medical, but also the literary abilities of every individual who intended to be a Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. The Professor, into whose hands any dissertation is put for his *perlegi*, if he will take the trouble of faithfully discharging a duty, which I own is not slight, may easily, by a very short conversation with the intended Candidate, ascertain whether he be a *vir doctus* or not. And in more instances than one, by such conversations, I have prevented Students from subjecting themselves to the *examen privatissimum*, till they had acquired both more medical knowledge and more literature. This I could easily ascertain by a simple question, on a single sentence of the inaugural dissertation. And to me it is perfectly astonishing, that Dr Alison, in a printed paper which he has lately circulated among us, to demonstrate the superiority of the new Regulations over the

former Statutes, has said not one word respecting Inaugural Dissertations, which I have always considered as the most important trial which any candidate can undergo.

Our Statuta Solennia have hitherto been constantly promulgated to your Studens in the Latin language only. This, I think, is essentially requisite, and should never be deserted. To our Students, the laws for graduation have never before been promulgated in English. The printing our new Regulations in English, would, I think, be highly disgraceful to the University. It has, indeed, Sir, been asserted in this room, and I readily allow the assertion to be true, that, by the direction of your very learned predecessor in office, Principal Robertson, an English translation of your Statuta Solennia was published in the newspapers. But, was that translation intended for your Students, who were to become Candidates for a degree? No, Sir, it was evidently intended for country gentlemen, who did not understand Latin. It was intended to deter illiterate apothecaries, who could not have understood your Statuta in Latin, from supposing they had learning enough to obtain the honour of a degree from Edinburgh. It was intended to proclaim to all Britain, that no one could obtain the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh, who was not a Latin scholar, and who could not undergo all his examinations in the Latin

language. This newspaper translation, then, in place of affording any arguments for putting into the hands of our Students Regulations in the English language, affords, in my opinion, a very strong argument for our Statutes being promulgated to Students in the Latin language only.

When you oblige every student to submit his inaugural dissertation, *eruditorum examini*, and to appear in presence of the Senatus Academicus, to defend that dissertation, you do him a most essential service. The publishing an inaugural dissertation has had the effect of giving both honour and publicity to an Edinburgh degree, more than all the privileges which our diploma confers. For once that any of our graduates can have a proper opportunity of producing his diploma, he will at least fifty times be invited to exhibit his inaugural dissertation. In every case, that inaugural dissertation affords the most incontestible evidence both of the literary and of the medical knowledge of our graduates. By the dissertations which have been published at Edinburgh, many of our graduates have done great honour to the University, as well as to themselves. I have now been concerned in graduation here for more than thirty years; and I can, without hesitation, assert, in the most positive terms, that I have never witnessed any day of graduation which did not produce to the world some dissertations

not only doing great honour to our new created doctors, but extending the fame of our University. That it should ever, therefore, have been the wish of the Faculty of Medicine to make the publication of the inaugural dissertations an optional matter, is to me truly astonishing.

But if I was surprized at the two particulars already mentioned, I was still more astonished at the third circumstance in the new Regulations, to which I have alluded. By the first edition of these new Regulations, (for, in the space of a few weeks they have already undergone three corrected editions), the *examen privatissimum*, which was a previous step to any student becoming publicly a candidate for a degree, and by which the Faculty of Medicine are strictly enjoined to take due care, *ut nemo nisi literarum et medicinæ scientia probe imbutus candidatorum numero adscribatur ;* this *examen privatissimum*, Sir, by the first edition of your new regulations, was proposed to be entirely in the English language. In support of this very extraordinary change, it has been urged that, in the present state of literature, an examination in English is a much better mode for ascertaining the real medical abilities of a candidate than a Latin examination. It has been said, that if the *examen privatissimum* be continued in Latin, many intelligent apothecaries, wishing to retire from very fatiguing practice ; many army and navy surgeons, who have long practised medicine

with success, and who have studied in the best of all schools for useful medical knowledge, the school of nature and of experience, may yet be unable to give evidence of that knowledge of medicine, by an examination in the Latin language.

To this plausible argument in favour of an English examination, after the account I have already given of the examination of Dr Leeds, the only instance in which the examination in Latin was dispensed with, it is altogether unnecessary to give any farther reply. No one, Sir, whatever his medical knowledge or experience may be, ought to be received as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, unless he has so much literature as to be able to demonstrate his knowledge of medical science, by an examination conducted entirely in Latin. Without sufficient knowledge of Latin for such an examination, he can have no claim whatever to the title of a *Vir doctior*. Without pretending to the spirit of prophecy, I may, with confidence, venture to foretell, that, as soon as it is known to the public that our Senatus Academicus have repealed the judicious statute requiring that all the trials for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, *lingua Latina peragendæ sunt*, the superiority of an Edinburgh degree over that of other Scottish Universities, if not completely extinguished, will at least be very much diminished.

These insuperable objections to the first edition of the new English Regulations, I stated in a private manner, but in very explicit terms, to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Whether they had any influence with the Faculty, or not, I cannot pretend to say. But, at the very next meeting, when these Regulations were to be taken under consideration, a second edition of the new code of Regulations was put into my hands, by the Dean. And, since we last met in this room, in consequence, probably, of the disputes and discussions which have here taken place, a third edition of these new Regulations, still in the English language, has been transmitted to each Professor, for consideration at this meeting. Of these successive editions I shall only observe, that although, in some particulars, the former trials seem to be restored, yet it is in appearance only; and, in some particulars, they are now rendered much worse. After the most serious consideration, I am decidedly of opinion, that the second edition is more exceptionable than the first; and that the third edition, in place of being an amelioration, is liable to more numerous objections than either of the two former. But, after what I have already said, respecting regulations which are intended to be promulgated to our students in the English language, it is, perhaps, unnecessary to state any objections to these successive editions. With regard to the second edition, I shall only say, that,

although the necessity of an inaugural dissertation be restored, yet that dissertation is to be placed in such circumstances, as to deprive it almost entirely of that honour which it has hitherto conferred upon your Doctors of Medicine. The dissertation, though required to be printed for the use of the Faculty of Medicine, is no longer required to be subjected *eruditorum examini*. The candidate is no longer required to defend it, in public, in presence of the Senatus Academicus, but before the Faculty of Medicine only,—circumstances which effectually deprive it of a great deal of its credit with the public. With the public, every Doctor of Medicine, from the University of Edinburgh, derives much more credit, even from the title-page of his inaugural dissertation, which will be seen by many, than from the privileges mentioned in his diploma, which will be seen by very few.

In another particular, the second edition of the new Regulations, though, at first sight, it may seem to be corrected, is rendered decidedly worse than the first. By the first, the *examen privatissimum* was to be entirely in English. By the second, it is appointed to be partly in Latin, and partly in English. What, Sir, does this say to the candidate? It plainly implies, if you cannot answer us in Latin, we will be satisfied if you can answer us in English. But, if any one shall ever obtain the degree of Doctor of Medicine, from the University of Edinburgh, who is not able to

undergo his *examen privatissimum* wholly in the Latin language, the honour of that title, from the University of Edinburgh, over the same degree from St Andrew's, Aberdeen, or Glasgow, will be completely terminated.

The third edition of the new regulations is not only liable to these objections, but to many others. It has indeed the appearance of extending the curriculum of study, required of every student, before he can become a candidate for a degree. It seems to require, that the candidate shall not be taken under examination till he has had more opportunities of acquiring knowledge than were formerly necessary. But where, Sir, is it required, that he shall obtain this information? Not from private study,—the principal source of information with every student; not in Universities,—who alone possess the power of conferring the highest honours in Medicine; but from self-appointed teachers, by whom, in place of being instructed, he may be misled. Of these teachers, there are some, whose pecuniary interest, it is well known, has been promoted by misleading. There are some who have constituted themselves private teachers, not merely from the hopes of gain, but from the worst motives that can actuate the human heart, jealousy, envy, and revenge. Every private teacher is unquestionably entitled to give to his students such certificates as he thinks they deserve. And the certi-

ficates of a Mr Cline, a Sir Astley Cooper, or a Dr Barclay, will unquestionably have due weight with the public. Of the certificate of every practitioner, whether respectable or otherwise, it may always be said, *Valeat quantum valere potest.* But, in conferring University honours, they ought to have no weight. University honours should be strictly confined to those who have had opportunities, at least of acquiring knowledge, at Universities. And the moment you admit, into your *curriculum,* any other teachers but regular Professors at Universities, you prostitute those chartered rights which the Legislature has conferred upon you as an University.

But, Sir, it is altogether unnecessary for me to detain you with further objections against this new system of Regulations. In all the three forms in which it has been presented to you, it is liable to unsurmountable objections. These new Regulations, indeed, will very much diminish the labour of the examining Professors, and a Candidate will obtain his degree with as little trouble to the examining Professors at Edinburgh as at Glasgow, where, as I have been assured, both by Glasgow Doctors of Medicine lately graduated there, and by Glasgow Professors themselves, the trouble of the Examinator is very inconsiderable indeed. The degree will hereafter be granted almost entirely on the certificates of a regular education in any seminary, as it is at St Andrew's and

Aberdeen,—to men, who, like Dr PULTENEY, may be considered as entirely self-taught. But be assured, Sir, from the day on which we desert those Statuta Solennia, which have been followed with singular success for near a century, requiring that all your trials shall be in the Latin language, from the day that we promulgate our Regulations in English, and permit any English examination *intra Academiæ pomœria*, the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh will suffer an irrecoverable degradation.

With the sole view, therefore, of protecting the honour of your future Doctors of Medicine, I have already protested *in toto* against the new English Regulations which have been proposed to you. But I would fain hope, Mr Principal, that the degradation with which our future Doctors of Medicine are now threatened, may be prevented by the two previous questions, which I formerly suggested, with the view of setting this controversy at rest.

The first question is, Whether the Senatus Academicus will agree or not to continue for three graduations longer, without any alteration whatever, the Statuta Solennia which were followed at the last graduation? And the second question, Whether, after that period, they will promulgate to their Students an improved edition of the for-

mer Latin Statuta, or shall adopt new English Regulations?

With regard to the first of these questions, after reasoning, it was unanimously agreed, "That the Statuta Solennia respecting the degree of Doctor of Medicine, which have been observed for near an hundred years past, and which, with some improvements, were published to the Students in 1823, *shall continue to be observed, without any alteration whatever, for three graduations longer, viz. for* 1825, 1826, *and* 1827."

With regard to the second question, after reasoning, it was agreed, that the state of the vote should be, New Regulations, or Not. It carried New Regulations,—twelve voting for New Regulations, Ten not. But what these new Regulations, commencing with the graduations 1828, *may be, still remains to be determined by the Senatus Academicus.*

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